



# MassDEPNEWS

Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection

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**Patrick-Murray Administration Announces Installation of Pollution Controls on Another 149 Buses Serving 22 Communities Across the Commonwealth**

***Diesel Retrofits Clean the Air from Vehicles that Serve More Than 21,000 Students***

BOSTON – Building on the Patrick-Murray Administration’s efforts to promote environmental stewardship, the Massachusetts Department of Environmental Protection (MassDEP) today announced that four new bus owners have taken advantage of free diesel retrofit installations under the “MASSCLEANDIESEL: Clean Air for Kids” program. This program pays for the installation of pollution controls on eligible diesel school buses.

“Each school bus that receives a retrofit under this free program helps to protect students and the health of our local communities,” said Energy and Environmental Affairs Secretary Richard K. Sullivan Jr.

Participating in this round of MASSCLEANDIESEL school bus retrofits are: Dee Bus Service of Shirley; E.H. Merrifield Bus Co., Inc. of Athol; Christianson Bus LLC of Chelmsford; and H&W Transportation, Inc. of Winchendon.

Under MASSCLEANDIESEL, these four private bus owners have installed pollution controls on 149 diesel school buses that serve approximately 21,750 students across 22 municipalities in the Commonwealth. Firms based in New Bedford and Tyngsboro installed the retrofit devices.

“The clean diesel effort is a perfect example of the MassDOT ‘GreenDOT’ initiative’s commitment to a transportation system that supports a clean and healthy environment,” said Massachusetts Department of Transportation Secretary and CEO Jeffrey Mullan.

“Our goal is to provide an excellent and equitable education for all of our students and that starts with helping them arrive at school healthy and prepared to learn,” said Education Secretary Paul Reville.

With \$16.5 million in state and federal funding provided by the Massachusetts Department of Transportation (MassDOT), under an agreement associated with the Central Artery/Tunnel Project, MASSCLEANDIESEL: Clean Air for Kids aims to install pollution controls – known as diesel retrofits – on thousands of diesel-powered school buses across the Commonwealth. MASSCLEANDIESEL is the nation’s first fully funded, statewide program to reduce air pollution from school buses statewide. There are now 38 participating bus owners who have retrofitted



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901 school buses, providing cleaner air benefits to more than 114,000 students across 178 municipalities.

“Each retrofit will reduce pollution from the exhaust and result in cleaner air for everyone,” said MassDEP Commissioner Kenneth L. Kimmell. “This is especially important for children whose developing lungs are particularly susceptible to diesel exhaust’s damaging health effects.”

**Dee Bus Service** transports approximately 14,800 students across 10 communities in the Commonwealth, including students in the Tyngsboro and Westford public school systems, students attending the Groton Dunstable Regional School District, and students attending public school in the towns of Ayer, Shirley, Clinton, Maynard, Boxborough, and Littleton.

“MassDEP put together a great program,” said Robert Dee, General Manager of Dee Bus Service of Shirley, which received pollution controls on 106 buses in its fleet. “Everything ran so smoothly it was as if the program was running itself. And although you know the air is cleaner, you can actually see how much cleaner it is when you change the filters. This is a huge benefit for the kids, the drivers and the communities we serve!”

**E.H. Merrifield Bus Co., Inc.** of Athol installed retrofits on 17 buses in its fleet. These buses represent nearly 40 percent of Merrifield’s fleet and are responsible for transporting approximately 4,750 students attending the Athol Rolyston Regional School District, students from New Salem, Petersham, Warwick, Wendell, and Orange who attend Orange public schools and students from Athol, Petersham and Phillipston who attend the Montachusset Regional Technical School.

“I am all for cleaning up the air quality and would recommend this program to others,” said Don Papini, Head Mechanic for E.H. Merrifield.

**Christianson Bus LLC** of Chelmsford received retrofits on nine buses in its fleet, which transport approximately 800 students attending the Shawsheen Regional Technical High School in Billerica and the Tewksbury public schools.

“This was an excellent program,” said Christianson’s head mechanic, Dan Shea. “It was well-run and I had no problems with the vendors or the retrofit technology whatsoever and I can definitely tell the difference in the air. There is no longer a diesel exhaust smell. The air is cleaner, sort of a bleachy smell, like the new buses. Thanks for giving us a chance to clean up our fleet.”

**H&W Transportation, Inc.** of Winchendon received retrofits on 17 buses in its fleet. H&W Transportation is responsible for transporting approximately 1,400 students to Winchendon’s four public schools.



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“I can tell that the air is cleaner than it used to be. When I'm in a lineup waiting for the kids, I don't have that blast of diesel smell that I used to have,” said Clarence Farrar, Head Mechanic for H&W. “I would definitely recommend this program to anyone needing to upgrade their fleet. I'm sure it has to improve the quality of the air. It's very obvious when you are standing behind the bus.”

By participating in the program, these school buses received a diesel oxidation catalyst (DOC), a crankcase ventilation (CCV) system, or both. DOCs, which function like a catalytic converter in the engine exhaust system, reduce tailpipe emissions. CCVs, which are installed on the engine, greatly reduce the infiltration of blow-by gases from the engine into a bus's interior.

Together, these two add-on components reduce emissions of fine particulate matter (PM – that is 2.5 micrometers in diameter or less) by at least 20 percent or more, hydrocarbons (HC) by 60 percent, and carbon monoxide (CO) by 60 percent. There is strong scientific evidence that PM is implicated in the rising asthma rates in school age children and is also considered a probable carcinogen. HC helps form ground-level smog, and exposure to this pollutant is associated with increased hospital admissions for respiratory distress, such as bronchitis. Exposure to CO can cause headaches, nausea, and death.

**New England Transit Sales (NETS)**, located in Tyngsboro, performed retrofit installations on school buses owned by Dee, Christianson and H&W Transportation.

**Shuster Corporation of New Bedford** installed retrofit devices for E. H. Merrifield. .

For more information on school bus diesel retrofits, visit:

[www.mass.gov/dep/air/masscleandiesel](http://www.mass.gov/dep/air/masscleandiesel), e-mail program officials at [massclean.diesel@state.ma.us](mailto:massclean.diesel@state.ma.us), or call the MASSCLEANDIESEL Help Line at 617-292-5809.

MassDEP is responsible for ensuring clean air and water, safe management and recycling of solid and hazardous wastes, timely cleanup of hazardous waste sites and spills, and the preservation of wetlands and coastal resources.

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